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Committee on Conferences
Substantive session of 2004

Draft report

Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Mu'taz **Hyassat** (Jordan)

The Committee on Conferences recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Pattern of conferences

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including resolutions 40/243 of 18 December 1985, 41/213 of 19 December 1986, 43/222 A to E of 1 December 1988, 51/211 A to E of 18 December 1996, 52/214 of 22 December 1997, 53/208 A to E of 18 December 1998, 54/248 of 23 December 1999, 55/222 of 23 December 2000, 56/242 of 24 December 2001, 56/254 D of 27 March 2002, 56/262 of 15 February 2002, 56/287 of 27 June 2002, 57/283 A of 20 December 2002, 57/283 B of 15 April 2003 and 58/250 of 23 December 2003,

Having considered the report of the Committee on Conferences[1] and the relevant reports of the Secretary-General,[2]

Reaffirming the provisions relevant to conference services of its resolutions on multilingualism,

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 32* (A/59/32).
[2] A/59/159 and A/59/172.

I
Calendar of conferences and meetings

[1. *Approves* the draft revised calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 2005, as submitted by the Committee on Conferences,[3] taking into account the observations of the Committee and subject to the provisions of the present resolution;]

2. *Authorizes* the Committee on Conferences to make any adjustments to the calendar of conferences and meetings for 2005 that may become necessary as a result of actions and decisions taken by the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session;

3. *Notes with satisfaction* that the Secretariat has taken into account the arrangements referred to in General Assembly resolutions 53/208 A, 54/248, 55/222, 56/242 and 57/283 B concerning Orthodox Good Friday and the official holidays of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, and requests all intergovernmental bodies to continue to observe those decisions when planning their meetings;

[4. *Notes with concern* the overlap between the sessions of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the Commission on Sustainable Development, decides that there should be an intervening period of at least two weeks after the closing of the Governing Council, or the other relevant intergovernmental bodies in future years, and the beginning of the session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, in accordance with the multi-year programme of work of the Commission, and requests that the Governing Council and the Commission closely coordinate meeting dates and programmes of work so as to avoid overlap between sessions;]

[5. *Requests* all organs that have not yet determined their meeting dates and/or location to do so expeditiously;]

[6. *Notes* that the United Nations Office at Geneva can provide the Joint Inspection Unit with the required conference services within its resources, and decides to include the Joint Inspection Unit in the proposed calendar of conferences and meetings;]

II
A. Utilization of conference-servicing resources and facilities

1. *Notes* the improvements in the utilization of the conference centre at the Economic Commission for Africa in response to section II.A, paragraph 1, of its resolution 58/250, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to explore all possible options to increase further the utilization of the conference centre;

2. *Also notes* that the overall utilization factor at the four main duty stations in 2003 increased to 77 per cent, and 72 per cent if only related

[3] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 32* (A/59/32), annex II.

reassignments were considered, which is somewhat below the benchmark of 80 per cent, and encourages the bureaux and secretariats to meet the benchmark;

3. *Requests* the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences to continue to consult with those bodies that have consistently utilized less than the applicable benchmark figure of their allocated resources of the past three sessions with a view to making appropriate recommendations in order to achieve the optimum utilization of conference-servicing resources, and urges the secretariats and bureaux of bodies that underutilize their conference-servicing resources, with assistance from the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management of the Secretariat, to consider changes to their programme of work, as appropriate, including adjustments and reductions in the allocation of conference services as agreed by the bureaux of the bodies concerned, based on previous patterns for recurring agenda items, with a view to making improvements in their utilization factors;

4. *Welcomes* the efforts that are being made to improve the utilization of the conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, as set out in the report of the Secretary-General; [4]

5. *Recalls* its several resolutions, including resolution 57/283 B, section II.A, paragraph 9, and reaffirms that all meetings of Nairobi-based United Nations bodies shall take place in Nairobi, except as otherwise authorized by the General Assembly or the Committee on Conferences acting on its behalf, and requests the Secretary-General to report on the subject to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session through the Committee on Conferences;

6. *Reiterates its encouragement* to the Secretary-General to continue to intensify the efforts being made by the United Nations Office at Nairobi to attract more meetings to its facilities;

7. *Strongly discourages* any invitation to host meetings that would violate the headquarters rule, in particular for the United Nations Office at Nairobi and other United Nations centres with a low utilization level;

[8. *Expresses deep concern* over the remaining vacancies in the interpretation and translation services, in particular at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, and notes the efforts of the Secretary-General to fill the vacancies, and requests him to report thereon to the General Assembly through the Committee on Conferences;]

9. *Notes* the importance of meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States for the smooth functioning of the sessions of intergovernmental bodies, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure that, as far as possible, all requests for conference services for meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States are met;

10. *Notes with concern* that the percentage of meetings held by regional and other major groupings that were provided with interpretation services during the reporting period decreased from 92 per cent during the period from

[4] A/58/530.

May 2002 to April 2003 to 90 per cent during the period from May 2003 to April 2004 for the four main duty stations;

11. *Notes* that, in absolute terms, the number of meetings provided with interpretation services was 10 per cent higher than in the biennium 2002-2003;

[12. *Recalls* that meetings held by regional and other major groupings of Member States are provided with interpretation services on an ad hoc basis, in accordance with established practice;]

13. *Recommends* systematic follow-up regarding the utilization of conference services by those bodies that consistently underutilize their conference-servicing resources over a longer period of time in order to identify the underlying causes for being unable to reach the benchmark;

14. *Also recommends* that, in future, statistics on both related and non-related reassignments be reported on;

B. Reform of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management

1. *Welcomes* the continued efforts of the Secretary-General in reforming the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management;

2. *Appreciates* the efforts of the Secretary-General in providing timely and detailed information during the consideration of the item entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly";

3. *Stresses* that the reform of the Department is aimed at improving the quality of documents and their timely production and delivery as well as the quality of conference services provided to Member States, with a view to meeting their needs as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible and in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly;

4. *Reiterates* its request contained in section II.B, paragraph 3, of its resolution 58/250;

5. *Notes* the ongoing efforts towards the establishment of the integrated global management system, and requests the Secretary-General to consider the current outcomes in the light of the report prepared by the Office of Internal Oversight Services on this issue;[5]

6. *Also notes* the establishment by the Secretary-General of a Secretariat task force to conduct a comprehensive study of workload standards and performance measurement and the preliminary findings of the task force, and requests the Secretary-General to pursue the study of workload standards and performance measurement, in both qualitative and quantitative terms, with a view to presenting to the General Assembly a proposal for a comprehensive methodology for performance measurement and management from a full-system perspective, while also paying attention to the specificities of all the official languages;

7. *Reiterates* its request that the Secretary-General develop further effective measures to strengthen the responsibility and accountability system

[5] See A/59/133 and Corr.1.

within the Secretariat in order to ensure the timely submission of documents for processing and that he submit a comprehensive report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session through the Committee on Conferences;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to pursue the delivery of summary records, a useful and vital tool for Member States, in particular in maintaining the institutional memory of the Organization, in a more efficient and cost-effective manner in full consultation with all the relevant intergovernmental bodies;

9. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to examine the options, including the setting of a timetable, put forward in his report,[6] to study their practical and financial implications, and to present a pilot project to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session, taking into account the views of all intergovernmental bodies concerned;

10. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to further develop the functions of the Electronic Meetings Planning and Resource Allocation System as the central tool for managing meetings to cover the entire spectrum of meeting-related activities and to expand its application across duty stations;

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to implement further the electronic documentation management concept, including the actual electronic transmission of documents through the documentation chain;

12. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to enhance the use of printing on demand for parliamentary documentation, as a means of improving services provided to Member States, on the basis of experience gained and lessons learned, including views expressed by Member States, and to consider the use of printing on demand for publications;

III

Documentation- and publication-related matters

1. *Emphasizes* the importance of the equality of the six official languages of the United Nations;

2. *Notes with concern* the delay in the issuance of verbatim and summary records and, in this regard, requests the Secretary-General to take appropriate measures to ameliorate the situation, with a view to issuing them in a timely fashion;

3. *Also notes with concern* that the six-week rule for the issuance of documents is not fully complied with owing to, inter alia, the continued late submission of documents by author departments, and requests the Secretary-General to take further urgent measures to ensure strict compliance with the six-week rule for the timely issuance of documentation in view of the impact of their late issuance on the functioning of intergovernmental and expert bodies;

[6] A/59/172.

[4. *Notes* that the rate of compliance with the page limits remains only partial[7] and that reports not originating in the Secretariat comprise the bulk of the documents issued, and requests the Secretary-General to implement, to the extent possible, a twenty-page limit for such documents and to report on the matter to the General Assembly through the Committee on Conferences;]

[5. *Appeals* to Member States to exercise restraint in the length of communications when submitting them for circulation as official documents;]

6. *Notes with deep concern* the late issuance of documents of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly owing to the late submission of manuscripts;

7. *Recalls* section III, paragraphs 25, 26, 27 and 28, of resolution 57/283 B, and paragraph III.10 of resolution 58/250, and urges the Secretary-General to continue the consultations referred to in this context, with a view to broadening the electronic distribution of documentation while maintaining the distribution of printed copies as required, and to report on the matter to the General Assembly through the Committee on Conferences;

8. *Notes with concern* the violations of the rule that parliamentary documents must be distributed simultaneously in all official languages;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that the rules concerning simultaneous distribution of documents in all official languages are followed with respect to the posting of parliamentary documentation on the Official Document System and on the United Nations web site, in keeping with section III, paragraph 5, of General Assembly resolution 55/222;

10. *Notes with concern* the non-compliance with rule 59 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure the communication of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly to Member States within 15 days after the closure of the session;

IV

Translation- and interpretation-related matters

1. *Notes with appreciation* the continued practice of holding informational meetings with Member States to consult with them on the improvement of the language services and the intention to establish additional channels for communication on the terminology used and the quality of services rendered, and requests the Secretary-General to organize informational meetings twice a year and in a more appropriate setting, with interpretation provided on an as-available basis;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General, when recruiting temporary assistance in language services, to ensure that all the language services are given equal treatment and are provided with equally favourable working conditions and resources with a view to achieving maximum quality of their services, with full respect for the specificities of the six official languages, taking into account their respective workloads;

[7] See A/59/159, paras. 36-46.

3. *Reiterates its request* that the Secretary-General continue his efforts to explore the use of new technologies, such as computer-assisted translation, remote and off-site translation and speech recognition, in the six official languages so as to enhance further the productivity of the conference services, and to keep the General Assembly informed of the introduction of any other new technology;

4. *Recognizes* the possible benefit of exchanging language staff among duty stations, and requests the Secretary-General to report on conditions of such exchange for the consideration of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session;

V
Information technology

1. *Notes* the progress achieved thus far across duty stations in integrating information technology into management and documentation-processing systems and the global approach to sharing standards, good practices and technological achievements among the conference services at all duty stations;

2. *Emphasizes* that all duty stations shall be given adequate resources for the effective and efficient discharge of their respective mandates and, in this respect, welcomes the efforts of the Secretary-General to provide the available conference-servicing management tools and best practices to all duty stations;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the compatibility of technologies used in all duty stations and to ensure that they are user-friendly for all official languages;

VI
Organization of work

[*Recommends* that the item entitled "Pattern of conferences" be biennialized starting with the sixty-first session of the General Assembly.]

[bis. *Recommends* that the issue of the biennialization of this item be referred to the General Assembly in the light of the comments expressed in the Committee on Conferences.]

[ter. *Recommends* that the item entitled "Pattern of conferences" be retained annually on the agenda of the General Assembly.]